



c.61 – architecture

'Rance's Folly', St Andrew's Street, demolished 1957

Note: includes some of prominent buildings lost or constructed

1898 06 09

Cambridge town council accepted a design for new police and fire brigade buildings, which it is proposed to erect upon the Spinning House site. If the new station is erected the whole of the existing buildings, which are not conspicuous for their beauty, will be removed, with the exception of the chief constable's house, and the fire station and firemen's quarters will be completely isolated from the police building. A new main entrance will be erected and it is suggested that the present stone gateway to the police station should be removed to the back entrance in Downing place. The only elevation of any architectural pretensions will be the main facade towards St Andrews's street. A copula forming a central feature will serve as a "look-out" in connection with the fire station. The plans include provision for a mortuary 1898 06 09

1900

1909 01 01

F.W. Fawcett was the architect of many Cambridge buildings including the Cavendish Laboratory & various departments in the New Museums site. He undertook the restoration of a large part of Queens' College, designed additions to Addenbrooke's Hospital, remodelled the County Gaol & built the Training College for Women, the County Police Station, several college boathouses and cricket pavilions as well as several large mansions including Longstowe and Six Mile Bottom CWN 09 01 01

1909 12 31

The 250-year-old Tithe Barn in Shelley-Row, Castle End is to be pulled down to make way for new houses. It is still in good repair with patches of new straw used to mend the high and thickly-thatched roof. It was used as a resting-place by the French prisoners taken in the Peninsular War during their journey to the prison camp at Norman Cross. Many people bought objects such as dice and dominoes they made from the bones of the meat supplied to them. The 'True Blue' in Hobson Street was also one of the billets. CWN 09 12 31

1920

1925 08 07

Sir – the proposed garage on Christ's Pieces has called forth a crop of protesting letters; let them be directed against the ugly, barrack-like Councils houses at Chesterton and Cavendish Avenue. The majority of the houses are literally a blot on the landscape, badly designed, dreary and poverty-stricken, they are eyesores to every passer-by. Yet they are being built without a word of protest, while the cutting down of a couple of trees evokes a regular storm of indignation – Kappal 25 08 07

1925 11 18

The 100ft high chimney stack which has stood for close on 300 years on the site of the old disused flour mill at the corner of Mill Lane and Granta Place, Cambridge, was pulled down. A platform was erected at the base of the stack which rises from the now dry river bed, and fuel in the form of straw, wood and corn was placed thereon. The whole was then soaked with paraffin oil, a match applied and the work of destruction begun. But the old giant took a deal of shifting and it was not until the flames had licked about his feet for over a quarter of an hour did he sway and crash to the ground amid a deafening crescendo of falling masonry 25 11 18

1930

1934 09 22

Statues on Market Hill conduit named – 34 09 22

1935 04 10

Demolition work on Peas Hill for the new Guildhall has led to an architectural discovery of outstanding interest. It has revealed the residence and business premises of a well-to-do Tudor merchant which was subsequently divided up into a detached and two semi-detached houses. The magnificent front was covered up with lath and plaster in the reign of Queen Anne and finished with mock bricks. Dummy eaves were also added. Now each piece has been carefully taken down and numbered for preservation and re-erection. 35 04 10

1935 05 01

The Guildhall Protest Committee criticised plans for a useless portico of a most ornate and incongruous style which could be 'put on cold' in from of the proposed façade of the new Guildhall in two years' time if the town really wanted it. The main entrance should be on Market Hill. It would allow a terrace which would form a platform for addressing meetings on Market Hill and give a façade of distinction that the people strongly desire. There was also intense feeling regarding the question of shops on the Peas Hill side 35 05 01

1936 10 20

King's College had employed a firm to supply a pump to serve half-a-dozen jets of water at their fountain. They had intended to use the water over and over again but found that with the heavy wind the water was blown over the gravel and did not go back into the fountain. So they had connected the mains to make up the loss. This contravened Water Company byelaws and there was a danger of contaminating the supply 36 10 20a

1937 02 01

Alexander Paul MacAlister was articled to Messrs Fawcett's, a Cambridge firm of architects, before starting on his own in St Andrew's Street 45 years ago. He designed the new block at Fulbourn Mental Hospital and the Tubercular Hospital at Antwerp as well as many houses in Madingley Road. He founded the Cambridge Amateur Operatic Society and played parts in all the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. 37 02 01

1940

1944 04 15

Stone gateway at Holy Trinity churchyard erected by Richard Reynolds in 1770; he occupied a hose and had a right of way over the churchyard from Crane Lane. It was made from materials removed from the ruins of an ancient chapel at Reach, a small portion of which remains – 44 04 15

1944 10 05

Cambridge Sea Cadet Corps take Oyster Bar, Garlic Row for HQ; dates back to 1707 – 44 10 05

1945 06 15

Folk Museum new home – Lord Fairhaven offers Abbey House in recognition of VE Day – CDN

1945 06 13 Abbey House – historical facts by F.A. Keynes – CDN 1945 06 15

1950

1951 01 08

The Minister of Town and County Planning has compiled a list of buildings in Cambridge, which are afforded a degree of protection which they have not hitherto enjoyed. The list is a formidable one covering colleges, University buildings, churches, public houses, business premises and private houses. It includes the modern Laboratory of Physical Chemistry in Free School Lane which incorporates the 16th-century hall of the original Perse school with its fine hammer-beam roof c51 01 08

1953 01 21

Cambridge city council have asked the County not to demolish the old Assize Courts which are at present closed because of dry rot. As it is a building of special architectural interest further consideration should be given to its preservation. Dry rot does not necessarily involve the demolition of the whole structure of an affected building – none of the Colleges have had to demolish their buildings, though many of them have been affected from time to time. But the County says there is no assurance that further infection could be prevented. They intend to re-erect the façade of the building elsewhere

1951 01 23

Cambridge town planning committee say there can be no justification for a spine relief road between Histon Road corner and Jesus Lane merely to preserve for a few years more buildings on the west side of Magdalene Street which, although of some architectural interest, are sub-standard from every other point of view. Pending demolition the commercial use of the buildings should be terminated, doing away with the necessity for vehicles to wait outside c51 01 23

1953 07 21

Cambridge City Councillors recommended the partial demolition of the Conduit Head in Market Square. Due to inherent defects and deterioration much of the stone has given way or has fractured. Rebuilding would cost some £2,200. It could be strengthened with steel rods or demolished to the level of the granite plinth. The Conduit was erected in 1855 at a cost of £554. The steps, plinth and base are granite and the structure itself of Ancaster stone

1953 10 12

The condition of the stone of the conduit head on Cambridge Market Hill has been found to be much worse than anticipated during recent demolition work and so the Council will be recommended not to rebuild it. The condition of the stone was such that the only part which could be safely re-used was the four pillars and the cost of restoration would be at least £4,000, double the previous estimate. They propose to loan the carved figures from the conduit to the Folk Museum.

1953 10 12

A decision not to rebuild the Conduit head in Market Hill, Cambridge was described as a retrograde step by Ald James. "I know it is the fashion to run down Victorian architecture but I think it was very seemly. I think we should rebuild it in the same style". But Ald Priest said "If in ten years' time people see pictures of the Conduit as it was, there will be nothing to prevent them from replacing it by photographs. The majority of people are quite satisfied and the Secretary of the Preservation Society has written to say how nice we have made it".

1957 04 04

Hurst Park Avenue windmill demolition [229.1.7]

1957 06 21

Rance's Folly, the large redbrick house now being demolished in St Andrew's Street once had several lifts, four bathrooms and central heating – as well as a swimming pool. Guests even played tennis on the roof. It was built by Henry Rance who was Mayor in 1878 and 1882 – when he held council meetings in his dining room - and included a ballroom whose floor was laid by experts brought specially from Germany. Here his granddaughters were never at a loss for partners. 57 06 21 & 21a

1957 12 02

The Senate House has been restored and redecorated. The roof was strengthened, large chandeliers removed and soft diffused pink coloured electric lighting installed in alcoves around the balcony to shed a clean warm light over the whole building. It now looks very similar to how it was nearly 130 years ago. 57 12 02a

1959 03 01

Emmanuel College's new building in St Andrew's Street has attracted many protests and the Anti-Ugly Society joined a mock funeral procession lead by four pall-bearers looking somewhat like Teddy Boys in their 'mourning weeds'. They bore a coffin inscribed 'Here Lieth British Architecture' which was placed outside the Porter's Lodge as mourners chanted 'Pull it down and burn it.' Although most onlookers treated the protest as a great joke for the Anti-Ugly Society it was a matter of serious importance in their genuine concern for architecture. 59 03 01b

1959 05 22

Cambridge Historic Buildings list published – 59 05 22

1959 06 18

The giant new Prudential Building on the junction of St Andrew's Street and Emmanuel Street incorporates the latest building techniques with heating and hot water provided by electrical units which take power from the mains during 'off-peak' hours and store it for use during the day. Acoustic ceiling tiles provide quieter working conditions, floors are of a coloured plastic tile and decorations in pastel shades. The basement contains a large garage and special storage to cater for the large use of bicycles by staff. 58 06 18

1959 12 21

The controversy surrounding the Central Hotel in Peas Hill, which King's College want to knock down and replace by a new hostel for students has reached a new stage with the publication of a booklet. The St Edward's Committee was established when it was announced that the Central Hotel, a largely 17th-century building forming an integral part of a square around St Edward's churchyard, was

to all appearances doomed. They believe it could be preserved and are pressing for a public inquiry into the proposals. 59 12 21c & d

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 01 07

Central Hotel preservation call – 60 01 07

1960 01 08

King's College has replied to criticism of its plans to demolish the 17th-century Central Hotel on the corner of St Edward's Passage and Peas Hill. Whilst the Midland Bank premises are scheduled as an ancient monument, the St Edward's Passage premises are not. The College has considered eleven schemes for the site, some of which would preserve the façade, but the preservation of the interior was a hopelessly haphazard proposition. Their architect has taken infinite care to ensure the new building preserves the essentially domestic character of St Edward's Passage, says Noel Annan, the Provost. 60 01 08b

1960 02 10

The St Edward's Committee may launch a fund to buy the Central Hotel in Peas Hill and house students in converted rooms. King's College, the owner, says it would prefer to sell the building rather than undertake the work of preservation. The Holford Committee which suggested demolishing it has now decided to study the merits of the building 60 02 10

1960 03 10

A final decision to demolish the Central Hotel was made by King's College after discussion with the Cambridge Preservation Society. Only five Fellows voted to try to preserve the St Edward's Passage façade while demolishing the rest. Everybody agrees that the interior was in a hopeless state of disrepair. When the college bought the property in 1936 they intended to develop the site. In 1956 they concluded that no part of the hotel could be preserved and commissioned a new building. 60 03 10

1960 03 16

One of the landmarks of Cambridge which has overlooked the city for about 60 years was demolished. The 100-foot chimney on the Newmarket Road once belonged to one of the city's brickworks which closed down about a year ago owing to the lack of clay. A large portion of the base of the chimney was cut away and propped up by wooden supports. These were then set alight using paraffin and wood shavings and smoke gushed from the top of the chimney for the last time before it fell slowly and gracefully to the ground. The actual kilns have already been demolished to make way for Watts and Son, timber importers 60 03 16

1960 05 21

In demolishing the old Central Hotel near Cambridge Market Place, the contractors have found it to be in a worse condition than they anticipated, but it has conformed fairly accurately to the surveyor's report prepared by King's College who own the site. The comparatively recent facings of the interior of the building were concealing a rotting structure underneath and the building has had to be pulled down with extreme care – almost brick by brick. The hotel is being demolished in two phases of which the first has now been completed. The first half of the new building will be erected before the second half is pulled down 60 05 21a

1960 10 31

Charles Whitaker was one of the country's greatest wood carvers and sculptors. But his most prominent memorial is in Cambridge where he lived. His first stone-carving job was at Ridley Hall but every college bears the mark of his skill. He was responsible for the restoration of the outside of King's chapel, Trinity College fountain and the Gate of Honour at Caius. He also carved the

University Arms over the Examination School in Mill Lane and designed the coats of arms on Fen Causeway bridge and Ascham Road Library. 60 10 31

1961 10 20

The Malting House stands on one of the busiest corners in Cambridge yet overlooks a backwater of the Cam bordered by a meadow where cattle graze. It was a brewery until converted for habitation in 1902 when the Corporation demolished the front of the house to widen the road. The bricks for the new façade came from the old properties being taken down at that time. In 1912 what remained of the old malting was converted into a small hall where countless musical evenings have been held. The whole house, which used to be a single domicile, now has six domestic units 61 10 20

1961 12 01

A bold scheme to transform Cambridge Market Hill into the 'finest piazza in Europe' would involve banning traffic in King's Parade, demolition of a few buildings on the corner of St Mary's Passage and the complete clearance of the Market Place. The screen in front of King's college would be removed and the Senate House and Law Department buildings linked together to form one magnificent spacious vista, says architect G.M. Vickers 61 12 01b

1961 12 01

Arbury Road takes a lot of traffic but one bungalow is peaceful because its wings act as a sound buffer. It is built in the form of a square with the fourth side open and has five front doors leading on to a courtyard. The main door – distinguishable from the others by the letter box – leads into a small hall. The eight rooms are interconnected and, apart from the kitchen and bathroom, can be arranged to satisfy individual tastes. Running along the right wing is a wash house with enough space to dry a heavy wash. 61 12 01e

1961 12 06

Pythagoras Hall in Northampton Street has been bought by St John's College. It is the earliest secular building in the city and was home to the first Mayor of Cambridge. But his family lost its wealth and it was sold to Merton College, Oxford, in 1270. For several centuries it was leased to farmers and became a granary. St John's hope to use it for collegiate purposes, though it means that Lord Rothschild, a University lecturer in Zoology, will have to move 61 12 06

1962 12 08

Roebuck House, Chesterton – 62 12 08 & a

1962 02 01

The changing face of old Cambridge will soon see further demolition. Already a number of houses have been pulled down in Shelley Row and four more are to follow including one boasting an elegant example of a Mansard roof. The building on the corner of Leeke Street and Newmarket Row, known as Mendicity House, formerly provided lodgings for beggars following the Napoleonic War. It was later purchased by the Industrial Dwellings Company, set up to improve the inadequate housing in the Barnwell area. It is now Harris' butcher shop. 62 02 01b & c

1962 04 13

A glass staircase is just one of the fascinating features of a house in Queen Edith's Way which was built just before the war. It was designed by W.A. Cairns with sweeping curves, enormous bay windows at the front, a canopy above the sun terrace and arched doorways. The framework is of steel and armour-plate glass treads on slim rubber supports. The lounge has a circular mirror decorated with an engraving of a polo pony and rider. Much of the furniture is built in, including a cocktail bar and writing bureau 62 04 13

1963 09 03

Thatched cottage, Clement Place rethatched, thatched cottage to come down if extensions to Park Street Car Park [446.15.6]

1964 04 24

'Cambridge New Architecture' criticises the new Addenbrooke's Hospital in Hills Road. No doubt these bleak buildings work efficiently but the bungaloid growth of the out-patients building cannot mitigate the overall barrack-room atmosphere, it says. Bradwell's Court shopping centre is attractively self-effacing and the Snowcat is one of the few well-designed modern pubs. But other Arbury building is weak with prim brick terraces and utility steel or concrete doorways of modish design. It is a squandering of Cambridge's short-supply of housing land 64 04 24b

1964 06 05

Listed buildings may not be demolished but owners need not keep them in repair and they often deteriorate until they are condemned as a danger to public safety. Cromwell's barn in St Ives was a magnificent example of a 16th-century manorial barn but it was burn down because it became unsafe. In Cambridge many little cottages are disappearing behind scaffolding to emerge with a completely different character and price-tag. Some houses in Portugal Place and a tiny court near Sidney Sussex College are in danger but Orchard Street has been saved by the Preservation Society 64 06 05b

1964 07 22

Chesterton towers to be renovated and opened to public. It would be fenced off from flats to be constructed alongside 64 07 22c

1966

Scheme to make Corn Exchange into offices for City Architect [494.5.4]

1967 03 04

Dutch façade revealed on building during demolition work for Eaden Lilley; believed to be the only remaining trace of an old alleyway which ran parallel with Market Street – 67 03 04

1967 06 21

Cambridge police station now a listed building; built 1901 to design of John Morley – feature – 67 06 21

1969 07 25

Walt-ham-stell, large house in landscaped gardens, Barton Rd is the 1795 'House in the Fen', a famous old coaching inn; is tunnel to Grantchester & Roman well. Permission granted for demolition but should be saved – 69 07 25a

1967 07 26

County Council buy Howes Close mansion and 23 acres as extension Shire Hall site, to move Country Centre students – 67 07 26

1968 10 12

History Faculty building opens a year late – with leaks – 68 10 12

1969 05 14

Bridge Street buildings on corner Round Church Street must be restored to original condition; owners P.H. Allin want to demolish – 69 04 30a. Storm over plans to demolish – 69 05 14 , 14a

1969 10 25

Demolition of Regency Houses in Bene't Place to make way for bio-chemistry department – inquiry – 69 10 25

1969 10 29

Manor House old Chesterton demolished without protest [446 9.2]

1970

1970 01 28

Regency houses in Bene't Place may not be demolished for University biochemistry – 70 01 28

1970 07 01

History Faculty building wins RIBA award, despite leaks – 70 07 01

1970 08 11

Turnpike house near Barnwell Bridge bought from Jesus College, converted into house – 70 08 11

1970 10 14

Cheddars Lane Pumping Station should be preserved and listed say Government – 70 10 14

1971

Orchard Street house redevelopment saga, Mr Barton moved in 1964, 1971 started plans [446.15.5]

1971 03 12

Market Hill redevelopment – British Cinemas to build offices and shops at 3-5 but plaster ceilings and beams to be preserved – 71 03 12

1971 06 10

Bridge Street debacle: the two faces of Cambridge – laments crumbling buildings; feature 'A city in shackles' – 71 06 10 & a

1971 07 13

SOS as office blocks take over Hills Rd [446.13.5]

1971 08 23

Newmarket Road derelict house last of 'padding cans' houses built for navvies who came to build railways and dig coprolite – 71 08 23

1971 09 04

King Street new buildings ruin environment, Architectural Review claims – 71 09 04

1971 12 10

Sidney Street and Bridge Street townscape analysis report – 71 12 10a

1971 12 17

Townscape Analysis report by David Urwin acclaimed – 71 12 17a

1972 08 31

The preservation and restoration of the historic frontage of 10-16 Bridge Street, Cambridge is assured in new plans for a 40,000 sq.ft. development by the Scottish Mutual Assurance Company. An earlier version of the scheme was turned down after a public inquiry. It involved knocking down the corner building and replacing it with a new structure which the inspector at the inquiry described as "aggressive in design". The new plans preserve the Bridge Street frontage. The scheme occupies a prominent site at the corner of Round Church Street and Bridge Street which has been a topic of heated discussion between developers, planners and preservationists for several years 72 08 31

1974 10 05

A £2 million plan for converting the old Cambridge corn exchange into a multi-purpose concert hall was accepted by the City Amenities Committee. An early warning of stormy times ahead was given by Coun. Peter Cowell who said: "There is bound to be a lot of opposition". In their report the architects claim that "not only Cambridge but England as a whole will gain a concert hall of

potentially international stature which could attract the finest musical talent". They suggest the reshaped building could hold up to 1500 people and would also be ideal for events such as boxing, wrestling, operas, plays, exhibitions and conferences 74 10 05

1980

1982 10 14

One of Cambridge's most successful rebuilding schemes, Bridge House in Bridge Street, has received a top conservation award. The project involved rebuilding and refurbishing 16th century buildings which had fallen into a sad state of decay by 1970 – Tudor houses no longer fit to live in and derelict workshops. It was judged to be an outstanding piece of restoration work: the frontage was preserved and behind it was built a new office-block which can hardly be seen from the street. 82 10 14a

1982 12 20

David Roberts was an architect who contributed to the actual fabric of Cambridge. He has left the city crammed with his unobtrusive and modern buildings. Hundreds of undergraduates sleep, eat and study in the bedsit blocks, refectories and libraries he designed. He also converted St Michael's Court at Caius into sleek, street-level shops. His commissions included the X-ray department at old Addenbrooke's Hospital, an old people's centre, St Bede's School and three pubs. 82 12 20a

1984 06 19

Cambridge University's award-winning History Faculty building – which is plagued with defects – may be demolished only 16 years after it opened. Another option is to correct all the structural and heating problems as well as the leaks – but this could cost over £1 million. The building was heralded in a blaze of glory when it won a Royal Institute of British Architects national award for its designer so they do not want to demolish it 84 06 19 p6

1985 08 22

One of Cambridge's least-known grand houses has come on the market. The eight-bedroom mansion stands in more than three-quarters of an acre of ground and is approached by a long drive and carriage sweep. It has a fine entrance hall, large drawing and dining rooms, butler's pantry and a boiler house. It all sounds like the Newnham home of a Victorian worthy. The actual address is 242 Mill Road. The house is the former vicarage of St Philip's Church and there is planning consent for 17 sheltered homes to be built on the site. 85 08 22

1986 06 11

Chesterton Mill, in French's Road was built in 1847 but has stood derelict for the last 30 years. The eight-sided smock mill was only partially successful when driven by wind so the sails were removed in the 1890s and it was subsequently driven by steam, suction gas and diesel. It has now been renovated and starts a new lease of life as the home of Cambridge public relations firm Beveridge Kartupelis. 86 06 11a

1986 11 26

The Corn Exchange, Cambridge's new entertainment and conference complex, has opened after years of political wrangling. The four wall shell used for pop concerts, roller skating and badminton has been developed into an auditorium with versatile seating together with a tiered balcony and mezzanine terrace that can be used for a variety of purposes. At the back are changing rooms, dressing rooms and workshops while the King Room upstairs will be available for private functions 86 11 26d & e

1988 10 29

Sir Clive Sinclair's Stone House, on Madingley Road was built in 1896. If he had chosen a fortress to protect him from prying eyes he could hardly have found a more solid building. The walls are more than a foot thick in solid stone and even the front door is a formidable structure of metal and glass. It

has a Middle Eastern annexe with a fabulous hand-painted ceiling and a collection of calculators and computers in a large glass cabinet. It is on the market for £750,000 88 10 29a

1990 03 14

Unex group has produced details of its big new development, Intercity House, on the former Pordage distribution site at the corner of Brooklands Avenue and Hills Road. It will offer air-conditioned offices with crèche, restaurant and gymnasium together with 301 car parking spaces. The windows will be high-performance anodised aluminium and the scheme will reflect the style and quality of the Victorian Royal Albert Almshouses across the road – 90 03 14